

LINCOLN, NE – Congressman Jeff Fortenberry today announced his intention to introduce the Furthering International Nuclear Safety Act of 2011, a bill that would enhance worldwide cooperation on nuclear safety in light of the recent nuclear reactor crisis in post-earthquake Japan. The legislation would be the bipartisan House companion to a bill introduced yesterday by Senators Daniel Akaka (D-Hawaii) and Thomas Carper (D-Delaware).

"As Japan's post-earthquake emergency shows, nuclear facilities remain vulnerable to natural and man-made disasters," said Fortenberry. "Nuclear safety needs to improve globally; humanity cannot afford the costs of failure."

"With this legislation, the United States can help lead cooperative efforts through the Convention on Nuclear Safety to share information and plans to ensure the world's current fleet of nuclear reactors are operated as safely as possible," he added. "I look forward to introducing a companion soon in the House."

Negotiated in the aftermath of the Chernobyl disaster, the Convention on Nuclear Safety is an international treaty that seeks to improve civilian nuclear power reactor safety throughout the world. Signatory nations are required to submit reports on their implementation of the Convention's nuclear safety provisions and meet regularly to analyze the reports. The United States joined the Convention in 1999.

Under the proposed legislation, the United States representative to the Convention of Nuclear Safety would advocate for:

- the use of performance metrics for countries to assess their own nuclear safety progress;
- increased public availability of information about nuclear safety efforts;
- the International Atomic Energy Agency to provide additional support for safety, when possible; and
- all countries that have or are considering a civilian nuclear power program to join the Convention.

The bill would also require the Executive Branch to craft a strategic plan for international cooperation on nuclear power safety.

Fortenberry to Introduce Nuclear Safety Legislation

March 19, 2011

Fortenberry is a member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and a cofounder of the Congressional Nuclear Security Caucus.

###